



Reporter-Herald file photo

Bird-watchers look to the sky as two American kestrels are released into the air during the 2006 Northern Colorado Birding Fair.

Gone ^{to} the birds

This week holds potential for culture and helping the community. From art exhibits to band benefits, to job fairs and fairs celebrating birds and the Stone Age, there's something for everyone going on this week.

TUESDAY

Farmers Market at its peak

As we officially begin autumn, the Loveland Farmers Market is at its peak.

Many varieties of seasonal Colorado-grown produce are available at the market, including tomatoes, corn, okra, peaches, pears, apples, plums and roasted chili peppers.

The market is open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday in the Hobby Lobby parking lot, 3133 N. Garfield Ave.

Call 495-4889 or visit www.fortnet.org/market for more information.

THURSDAY

Artist to shine at talk

A gallery talk will focus on artist Laurie Zuckerman's exhibit, "Memento Mori: The Deconstruction of the Nuclear Family," 7-8:30 p.m. at the Loveland Museum/Gallery,

503 N. Lincoln Ave.

The exhibit, which includes home altars, memory jugs and shrine photography, continues through Nov. 1.

For details, call the Loveland Museum/Gallery at 962-2410.

Job Fair planned

Crossroads Church will hold a Job Fair 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Thursday, at the church at 5420 N. Taft Ave.

For details, call 203-9201 or visit www.crossroadscolorado.com.

Partners needs volunteers

Partners Mentoring Youth is looking for volunteers to take on one-to-one mentoring relationships with youths facing challenges in their personal, social and academic lives.

There are currently 50 youths waiting for mentors.

Partners is also seeking people to serve on its advisory committee.

ry committee.

An informational meeting will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. Thursday at 150 E. 29th St., suite 237A.

For details, call Eric Santi at 667-0911.

FRIDAY

Habitat to hold hoedown

The Berthoud Habitat for Humanity will hold its annual fundraiser hoedown from 5:30 to 10:30 p.m. Friday at Brookside Gardens, 619 E. Colorado 56.

Tickets are \$30. For details, call 532-4741.

SATURDAY

Fair celebrates birding

The annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair will take place 7 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday at Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space on Carpenter Road, one mile west of Interstate 25.

Guided bird walks begin at 7 a.m., raptor releases will take place at 9:15, 10:15 and 11:15 a.m. and interactive clinics will take place at 8 and 10 a.m. and noon.

For details, call Rob Novak at 679-4561 or visit www.larimer.org/natural resources.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY

Stone Age Fair returns

The Loveland Stone Age Fair will take place 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Saturday, and 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday at the Pulliam Building, 545 N. Cleveland Ave.

The free educational event features displays of prehistoric artifacts and demonstrations of flint knapping and bead-working.

The 2009 event celebrates the 75th anniversary of the original Stone Age Fair held at the Cornish School.

For details, visit www.stoneagefair.com.

SUNDAY

Bands and great food

A "Band Aid" dinner and concert to benefit the Loveland High School marching band, the Crimson Regiment, will be held 3-8 p.m. Sunday at Hammond Amphitheater, at North Lake Park, 29th Street and Taft Avenue. The dinner will feature food by Carrabba's and music by Bitter Creek, Montgomery Jazz Group, Modern Rhythm Project and the LHS Crimson Regiment.

Cost is \$20 a ticket.

For details, call 593-1920.

NEWS BY: YOU

SCARLET'S HAWKEYE



My husband and I attended the Northern Colorado Birding Fair on Saturday at Fossil Creek Reservoir. We especially enjoyed the falconry demonstration presented by falconer Tim Kloer and his beautiful red-tailed hawk Scarlet.

Special to the Reporter-Herald/HEATHER BENJAMIN



The Coloradoan, Thursday, September 10, 2009,

LARIMER COUNTY

Annual birding fair slated at open space

Are you crazy about birds? The fifth annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair at Larimer County's Fossil Creek Reservoir open space will feature a variety of family friendly activities Sept. 26.

Events include:

- > 7 to 7:15 a.m. — Guided bird walks
- > 8 to 11 a.m. — Hands-on activities
- > 9:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. — Hourly presentations
- > 8 a.m., 10 a.m., noon — Interactive clinics

For more information, visit www.larimer.org.

The Coloradoan, Wednesday, September 23, 2009

Birding fair, run-/walk among weekend events

Here are two events worth checking out this weekend:

> **5th Annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair:** 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space, on Carpenter Road one mile west of Interstate 25. The event includes guided bird walks at 7 a.m. and 7:15 a.m., hands-on activities 8 to 11 a.m., hourly presentations at 9:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. and interactive clinics at 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and noon. There also will be prizes awarded to those ages 12 and younger who complete their Birding Fair Passports and silent auction. Information: Rob Novak, (970) 679-4561 or www.larimer.org/natural-resources/birding_fair.htm.

Colorado Conservation Society Annual birding fair slated Saturday

Are you crazy about birds? The fifth annual Northern

Colorado Birding Fair at Larimer County's Fossil Creek Reservoir open space will feature a variety of family friendly activities Saturday.

Events include:

- 7 to 7:15 a.m. — Guided bird walks
- 8 to 11 a.m. — Hands-on activities
- 9:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. — Hourly presentations
- 8 a.m., 10 a.m., noon — Interactive clinics.

For more information, visit www.larimer.org.

9-23-09

Sept. 24, 2009 www.BerthoudRecorder.com

Birding Fair Sept. 26

Crazy about birds or just curious? Enjoy a free day of fun and learning for the entire family at the fifth annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair at Larimer County's Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space on Sept. 26.

Guided bird walks at 7 a.m. and 7:15 a.m., ongoing hands-on activities 8 to 11 a.m., hourly presentations from 9:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m., and 11:15 a.m., interactive clinics from 8 a.m., 10 a.m., and noon.

Directions and more information: Fossil Creek Reser-

voir Regional Open Space is located on Carpenter Road, 1-mile west of the I-25/Hwy. 392 Windsor exit. Contact Rob Novak at Larimer County Department of Natural Resources for more information, 970-679-4561 or movak@larimer.org.

For a full schedule of the day's events visit www.Larimer.org/naturalresources/birding_fair.htm.

To learn more about Larimer County's parks and open spaces, go to www.Larimer.org/naturalresources.

COUNTY Annual bird fair set for Sept. 26

The fifth annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair at Larimer County's Fossil Creek Reservoir open space will feature a variety of family-friendly activities on Sept. 26.

Events include:

- > 7 to 7:15 a.m. — guided bird walks
 - > 8 to 11 a.m. — hands-on activities
 - > 9:15, 10:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. — hourly presentations
 - > 8 and 10 a.m. and noon — interactive clinics
- For more information, visit www.larimer.org.

Surviving!

Bird Fair flocks into reservoir Sept. 26

Are you crazy about birds? The fifth annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair at Larimer County's Fossil Creek Reservoir open space will feature a variety of family friendly activities Sept. 26.

Events include:

- 7 to 7:15 a.m. — Guided bird walks
- 8 to 11 a.m. — Hands-on activities
- 9:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. — Hourly presentations
- 8 a.m., 10 a.m., noon — Interactive clinics.

For more information, visit www.larimer.org.

Loveland Connection staff

09-12-2009

Annual bird fair will flock to Fossil Creek

Are you crazy about birds? The fifth annual Northern Colorado Birding Fair at Larimer County's Fossil Creek Reservoir open space will feature a variety of family friendly activities Sept. 26.

Events include:

- 7 to 7:15 a.m. — Guided bird walks
- 8 to 11 a.m. — Hands-on activities
- 9:15 a.m., 10:15 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. — Hourly presentations
- 8 a.m., 10 a.m., noon — Interactive clinics.

For more information, visit www.larimer.org.

Loveland Connection staff

9-16-2009

NICE TO KNOW

The most common gall-makers in Colorado are: gall mites, jumping plant lice and woolly aphids.

Reporter Herald 10-01-09

October is last month to participate in Adopt-A-Trail

Larimer County has several opportunities for the public to participate in trail projects in October, the last month for the Adopt-A-Trail program this year.

In-Situ employees will work on the Horsetooth Rock trail 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 3.

The Fort Collins/Loveland Don't Hike Alone group will work on the Audra Culver Trail 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 10.

The Mountain High Trail Association will work on the Hunter Loop of the Devil's Backbone Trail 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 17.

The Larimer County Horseman's Association will work on the Westridge Trail 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 24.

The public can join the groups in the trail maintenance work. Signup is required for all of the projects and should be made by calling Justin Scharton at 679-4489 or e-mailing him at jscharton@larimer.org.

Any group interested in adopting a trail can also contact Scharton.

— Reporter-Herald staff

ODD SPORTS, VISIT WW

... people... other person.

But while we might see these people on a regularly basis, in no way, shape or form should we allow our journalistic integrity to interfere with the job. That sometimes can be difficult. But it's part of the job.

So why do I bring this up? Because time and time again I have seen players granting a high-five to a beat writer or a congratulatory hug. I saw it again last week.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'll congratulate a player or a coach from time to time. But have I ever given them a hug after a victory? No. Will I ever? No. Shoot, I don't even go up to players and ask them for an autograph — pro athletes, that is — if I'm at the game in an...

Volunteers wanted for open space work

Loveland Connection staff

Horticulture volunteers known as Dirt Devils are needed to support the gardens at Larimer County's Fossil Creek Reservoir Regional Open Space, between Loveland and Fort Collins, and at the Bison Visitor Center, near Carter Lake.

Volunteers should love to garden.

For more information, call 679-4552.

Connections 9-16-09

Volunteers wanted to capture images

Larimer County Department of Natural Resources is recruiting people interested in photography.

People are needed to be in the field to capture pictures of visitors recreating in the county's parks and open spaces.

If you have an interest in photography, contact **CJ Cullins** at 679-4552.

For more information, visit www.larimer.org/naturalresources.

Connections 9-16-09

OUR VIEW

Small grants can have big impact on public lands

Programs aimed at protecting, enhancing open space

Larimer County's Small Grants for Community Partnering program can have a big impact when it comes to protecting public lands.

The county program is a part of the Open Lands

Program; it allows residents and groups to apply for grants up to \$2,000 for projects that protect or enhance open space, trails, natural areas, wildlife habitat, river areas and wetlands on private or public land. Three new grant categories also have been added: agriculture, increased access to open spaces and research on open spaces.

The program is a positive effort in uniting residents for a common purpose. The use of public funds in the grant program is wise because it leverages seat equity among participants and ensures that long-needed projects are completed.

The Small Grants for Community Partnering also offers a reminder that protection of open spaces and land enhancement is not just the responsibility of a government program but also of individuals. While the Open Lands program is often characterized by its land purchases and large projects, smaller projects such as these can have a significant impact on educational opportunities, connecting neighbors to open space and preserving habitat.

Even planting trees can make a difference when it comes to attracting birds and expanding connections with open space.

Applications are due to the county by Oct. 14 with awards announced in

Participate

Applications for the 2010 Small Grants for Community Partnering program are due by 3 p.m. Oct. 14.

> Online at

www.larimer.org/parks/openlands/smallgrants.htm

> Larimer County Department of Natural Resources:

Application packets may be picked up at the Bison Visitor Center at 1800 S. County Road 31, Loveland.

> By mail: Contact

Sue Burke at the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources at (970) 679-4566 or sburke@larimer.org to request an application by mail.

To learn more about Larimer County's parks and open spaces, go to www.larimer.org/naturalresources.

Reporter Herald

9-19-09



Times-Call photos/JILL P. MOTT

Richard Carlson, who owns property along the proposed Lyons-Boulder trail, points to an area Friday where a bridge would have been built as part of the trail.

Lyons-Boulder trail plans withdrawn

By TONY KINDELSPIRE
LONGMONT TIMES-CALL

LONGMONT — The Boulder County commissioners announced Friday that they've put the brakes on a long-planned multiuse recreational trail between Lyons and Boulder.

Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District officials had expressed willingness to partner with the county when the idea for the 13-mile-long trail was first proposed last winter, Boulder County transportation director George Gerstle said.

Boulder County's plans for the trail included three possible scenarios; all would have involved using substantial stretches of land running along the Boulder Feeder Canal, a residential and irrigation ditch owned and managed by the district.

The water district's support for partnering on the trail changed over the summer, Commissioner Ben Pearlman said Friday.

"The clear sign was they suspended their trail guidelines that had been in place for a long time and that we had thought would guide this process," Pearlman said.

Earlier this month, the county commissioners and county staffers met with the full Northern Water board, which collectively indicated its reluctance to support the project, Gerstle said.

"Each individual board member expressed some specific concerns," Gerstle said, including security, safety, liability and water quality.

"It's huge news to all our neighbors around here," said Richard Carlson, who lives on Niwot Road and whose property line abuts the feeder canal.

Carlson and others founded the No Trail Alliance after details of the proposed trail came out earlier this year. He said the group has about 160 members.

The commissioners wanted to use stretches of the feeder canal because the ground is generally flat and mostly cleared of anything but grass. The commissioners also cited the "sweeping views of the plains and mountains, and a continuous path from north to south" in a letter released Friday.

The proposed path — which would have allowed hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders — would have been built just on the other side of Carlson's barbed-wire fence, which was one of the reasons he opposed it.

Gerstle said the county isn't giving up on the idea of the so-called LyBo trail — which has been on the county's wish list since the early 1970s. But unless Northern Water changes its mind back again, it's unlikely to happen anytime soon.



A sign outside Richard Carlson's home on Niwot Road states his opinion about the Lyons-Boulder trail.

HIKING INTO THE FUTURE



Rich Abrahamson/The Associated Press

Visitors taking a sneak peek at the Red Mountain Open Space walk over Sand Creek on May 28 as they hike through the Bent Rock Trail in northern Larimer County. The area opened to the public June 7.

GOCO makes 5-year plans

BY KEVIN DUGGAN

KevinDuggan@coloradoan.com

Like many teenagers, Great Outdoors Colorado is wondering what its future may hold.

The 15-year-old program, commonly known as GOCO, is developing a five-year strategic plan to help guide it in deciding the types of conservation and recreation programs to support, said Lise Aangeenbrug, the agency's executive director.

So far, during a series of meetings around the state, the messages from officials and the public have been consistent, Aangeenbrug said.

Communities are interested in protecting additional land and exploring what GOCO can do regarding water resources.

GOCO awards grants for open space, trails, parks and recreation projects across the state.

Its funding from Colorado Lottery proceeds has remained steady even during the economic slowdown and a drop in lottery sales.

The amendment to the

By the numbers

Great Outdoors Colorado, or GOCO:

- > Years awarding grants — 15
- > Total of grants awarded — \$650 million
- > Projects funded — 3,063
- > Awards to projects in Larimer County — \$35.8 million
- > Information: www.goco.org

state Constitution that created GOCO caps its funding at \$35 million in 1992 dollars. For this year, that translated to \$54 million, Aangeenbrug said.

Larimer County is a good example of how GOCO funds can be put to use, she said.

Open space and recreational programs in the county have received about \$36 million in GOCO funding over the years. It also has been involved in more than \$2.5 million in grants for programs that cross county boundaries, including programs with the Colorado Division of Wildlife.

"Not all counties have been as successful in terms of leveraging partnerships and receiving grants from all of our categories," she said.

"That's really been the hallmark of Larimer County."

Major grants include \$11.6 million toward the Laramie Foothills: Mountains to Plains project, which include the county-owned Red Mountain Open Space and Soapstone Prairie Natural Area owned by the city of Fort Collins.

The program also has helped with the purchase of the county's Hermit Park Open Space near Estes Park and provided more than \$5 million to preserve land along the Poudre and Big Thompson rivers.

Aangeenbrug and some members of the GOCO board of directors were in Fort Collins on Tuesday to meet with local officials and the public to get their views

on the agency's priorities.

Reduced land values offer opportunities to acquire more property, officials said, but local funding sources for that purpose are growing increasingly thin.

Local governments also need help with maintaining the open lands and parks they already have, they said, and more money is needed for building trails.

Bob Hewson, executive director of Colorado Youth Outdoors, a local nonprofit that works with schools along the Front Range, said encouraging partnerships between government agencies and nonprofits would be a good way to increase programming.

More needs to be done to connect young people to the land, said Kerri Rollins, a fund development and outreach specialist with the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources.

"If kids are playing inside because that's where their outlets are, we're not ever going to change their values unless we can figure out ways to get them out on the land," she said.

NEWS@COLORADOAN.COM

The final phase of Poudre River Trail construction begins

Highway underpass to move along project

BY KEVIN DUGGAN
KevinDuggan@coloradoan.com

A major milestone in the long-sought completion of Poudre River Trail is about to be placed near Windsor.

Crews will close Colorado Highway 392 beginning Monday for the installation of a precast 52-foot-long concrete underpass that will connect the trail from where it ends, west of the Poudre River to River Bluffs Open Space.

Construction of the trail through the Larimer County-owned open space, which is north of Colorado 392, is expected to happen next year, said Jeffery Boring, a resources specialist with the county's natural resources department.

"We hope to have River Bluffs open to the public by next fall," he said.

The open space is expected to have a 1/2-mile length of trail plus trailhead and parking area. The trailhead is planned for the north end of the property near County Road 32E, Boring said.

A pedestrian bridge would be built across the Poudre. Eventually, the trail will run along the east side of the river up to Harmony Road. The trail facilities are expected to cost about \$700,000.

The regional trail runs through LaPorte and Fort Collins as well as from Greeley to Windsor. The final segment of the trail would connect southeast Fort Collins to Windsor via Timnath.

Fort Collins expects to finish its portion of the trail in 2011, Boring said. The segment would run from the Environmental Learning Center under Interstate 25 to a site near the new Walmart Supercenter in Timnath.

Timnath would build the trail around the store to Harmony Road. The 1-mile length of trail would be funded by a \$392,000 federal grant

Road closures

- > Colorado Highway 392 is expected to be closed Monday through Sunday between Larimer County Road 3 and County Line Road for placement of an underpass of the highway for the Poudre River Trail.
- > During the closure, traffic will be detoured along county roads 3, 32E and County Line Road.

matched by a \$92,000 contribution from the town, said Kyle Boyd, public information officer for Timnath.

Construction is expected to start in spring, Boyd said.

The county hopes to acquire a right-of-way from local property owners and finish its portion in 2012, Boring said.

"It all depends on the availability of funding and willing landowners," he said. "But this trail is our top priority."

Finding a way across Colorado 392 has been an issue for years, officials say. The underpass project was expected to be done next year, but the availability of federal economic stimulus dollars moved up the construction, Boring said.

Projects had to be "shovel ready" and meet tight deadlines to be eligible for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act money, he said.

The underpass project is expected to cost \$421,000, said Rusty McDaniel, assistant county engineer.

Installing the underpass will require cutting the highway and digging out an area for the structure, McDaniel said. The concrete trail through the tunnel will be poured as part of the project, but the underpass will be barricaded on both ends until the trail through River Bluffs is built, he said.

2009 9-14-09

Kyle Boyd



Coloradoan and fellow Center.

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Colo. 392 to close for underpass work

Project will connect Poudre Trail

By PAMELA DICKMAN
REPORTER-HERALD STAFF WRITER

Construction of an underpass beneath Colorado 392 means jobs for local contractors, another piece in an effort to connect a regional trail and a weeklong detour for thousands of drivers.

Schmidt Earth Builders of Windsor will start digging up a piece of the highway into Windsor on Monday, closing the mile-long stretch from Larimer County Road 3 east to

County Line Road.

The highway, which sees 15,000 vehicles per day, will reopen no later than Sept. 20.

"Our stipulation in the contract is that all the work has to be done in that week," said Rusty McDaniel with the Larimer County Engineering Department.

The entire \$421,000 project will be paid for with federal stimulus dollars. All of the contractors involved are from

SEE UNDERPASS, PAGE A2

Detour route

A section of Colorado 392 will be closed to install an underpass to connect the Poudre River Trail from Greeley to Fort Collins.



Reporter-Herald graphic/KATE WYMAN

UNDERPASS: Poudre River Trail work paid for with stimulus funds, using local contractors

FROM PAGE A1

Colorado, said Charlie Bauer, project manager from Schmidt.

Two smaller contractors are from Colorado Springs, but the rest are from Northern Colorado, including Loveland.

While he wasn't sure how many jobs the stimulus project created or saved, Bauer did say it was "absolutely" helping in a tough economy. "It's all for real," Bauer said.

"The majority of it is local work." His crew and subcontractors will dig up a 30-foot stretch of the road to place 60,000-pound concrete box

culverts with a 200-ton crane.

They will then seal the culvert pieces together, replace the dirt around them and rebuild the road.

The underpass will eventually connect the Poudre River Trail from Greeley to Bellvue north of Fort Collins.

Sections of the trail to the east and west are already complete and will be connected by Larimer County, Timnath and Fort Collins.

The paved trail from Greeley currently ends a few feet from Colorado 392, where the sidewalk abruptly turns to grass.

Next year, that piece will tie into

Larimer County's River Bluffs Open Space just on the other side of Colorado 392. The underpass will provide safe access.

"It's a huge step," said Jeffrey Boring, resource specialist for the county's Department of Natural Resources.

"These roads are major barriers to extending the trail, so the fact we're going under the highway is huge."

The next step for the county is building a parking lot, trailhead and paved trail at River Bluffs with a \$494,000 grant from Great Outdoors Colorado.

Boring hopes the work will be complete and River Bluffs open to the public by fall 2010.

From there to the existing trail at the Colorado State University Service Center on East Prospect Road, Larimer County, Fort Collins and Timnath will each build a section of the trail.

Officials are negotiating with landowners for the exact route.

Boring added, "It'll be another three to four years before it's complete."

Pamela Dickman can be reached at 669-5050, ext. 526, or pdickman@reporter-herald.com.

County Natural Resources on Twitter

Do you tweet? In order to keep up with the times and to increase communication with the public, the Larimer County Department of Natural Resources now has a Twitter account. Citizens can be kept up to date on guided hikes, trail closures, time of wait at boat ramps, trail heads at capacity, reservoir water levels, fishing conditions, etc., through the Twitter account.

How does it work? People who are interested in receiving text messages and e-mails will be able to sign up for the "LCDNR" twitter account. Tweets will be sent out by designated department staff as information arises. The Twitter account information will be posted for the pub-

lic on the web site, brochures, kiosks, and monthly flyers.

How do you sign up? If you do not have Twitter account, but want to follow the LCDNR updates, go to <http://Twitter.com/LCDNR> to view tweets. If you choose to create an account from that page, you will be following LCDNR once your account is created. If you have an existing Twitter account and would like to receive LCDNR tweets, go to <http://Twitter.com/LCDNR>. From here, log into your Twitter account where you will have an option to "follow" LCDNR.

To learn more about Larimer County's parks and open spaces, go to www.Larimer.org/naturalresources.

Noxious weeds can be stopped early

Invasive plants are a threat to the economy and environment of Larimer County.

These invaders, also known as noxious weeds, originated in other parts of the world and when introduced into this country have flourished. Invasive stands of noxious weeds threaten our native plant communities, reducing species diversity and wildlife habitat.

Noxious weeds on rangeland and farmland are extremely costly to agricultural producers through reduced yields or expensive management. Many examples of weeds gone wild can be found in Larimer County, such as cheatgrass and Canada thistle. But the worst example of a noxious weed left uncontrolled is leafy spurge. This deep-rooted perennial has become established on many pastures from LaPorte to Wellington and on steep hillsides such as those along Rist Canyon.

Eradication of these invaders is not possible now, but it is hoped the infestations can be reduced to a more tolerable level and their spread prevented. If awareness had been greater years ago, maybe these invaders

Tim D'Amato

Open spaces

would have been controlled before becoming the problems we see today.

The introduction of invasive plants is still occurring. Yellow starthistle, which infests many millions of acres across California, Washington and Idaho, can be found on just a few acres in Larimer County. The infestation was recently discovered and it is hoped eradication will occur in the next couple of years. Other noxious weeds that have a foothold but not yet a foothold in Larimer County include Mediterranean sage, spotted knapweed, purple loosestrife and tamarisk.

The Larimer County Weed District is the agency working to minimize existing weed problems in the county and eliminate new invaders before they take hold. The district assists residents with site visits, plant identification, management recommendations and educational information on invasive species and works with residents so they are compliant with the Colorado State Noxious Weed Act.

The district is funded through a mill levy paid by residents within the district boundary, which includes approximately the eastern one-sixth of Larimer County. The mill levy is approximately \$1 per year per \$100,000 property value, or an average cost of \$2 to \$3 per year for most residents.

Activities conducted outside the boundary are funded through an enterprise program that obtains funds through contracted work with federal and state agencies and grants. It is the goal of the district to eventually expand to include all of Larimer County. Such an expansion would be more equitable to all county residents and provide greater services for areas distant from Fort Collins.

An expansion would require voter approval and will hopefully occur in the near future. For more information on the weed district and its services offered, call (970) 498-5768 or visit www.larimer.org/weeds.

Tim D'Amato is the land stewardship manager for Larimer County Department of Natural Resources. Contact him at (970) 498-5768 or send e-mail to tdamato@larimer.org.

Berthoud Weekly Surveyor September 23, 2009

Inspired art, naturally

The Larimer County Department of Natural Resources invites the public to see the work by 2009 Open Lands Visual Artist of the Year. Diane Findley, who was chosen in March, will unveil several paintings inspired by Larimer County Open Spaces at a show entitled "Open Landscape Paintings" on Friday, Oct. 2 from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Cache Bank & Trust at 100 S. College Ave. in Fort Collins. Held in conjunction with that city's monthly art walk, the exhibit of a dozen paintings will be up at Cache through the month of October.

Findley has been diligently working on her paintings since spring, and this event showcases the pieces created from the partnership between Findley and the Open Lands Program. There will be twelve paintings displaying different scenic locales in Larimer County-managed open spaces. The public will be able to vote for their favorite painting at www.larimer.org/openlands/artist.htm and the winning piece will be permanently displayed in the coun-

ty justice center.

A long-time Fort Collins resident, Findley works in the mediums of painting and pottery, and has been immersed in the local arts community for over 30 years. She is a member of the Trimble Court Artisans Co-op and has also been involved with the Larimer County Food Bank's Empty Bowls program, the City of Fort Collins' Art in Public Places campaign, and the Fort Collins Symphony Orchestra "Color of Sound" event.

"The best part of this experience," said Findley, "is just waking up to all the glorious scenery at our fingertips." Her enthusiasm is as bold as the colors and strokes on the canvas. This artist isn't afraid to paint a sky green and she obviously takes the moniker "Colorful Colorado" very seriously.

Findley is the third artist given this honor since the inception of the program in 2006. For more information on participating, visit their Web site or contact Justin Scharton at 970-679-4489. Please stop by to



"Lyons Park" by Diane Findley is one of a dozen paintings to be unveiled on Oct. 2 in Fort Collins. The vivid colors and broad strokes indicate the artist's signature style. More of her projects and contributions to the community can be found at www.dianefindley.com.

celebrate Findley's art and Larimer County's continued commitment to protect important landscapes in Larimer County.

TUESDAY'S DRAWING
Cash 5:
 1-5-8-26-31

Jury gets Aarone case today
 Almanac, B3

SEPTEMBER 16, 2009
FRONT RANGE
 Wednesday
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Preservation plan gets money

Colorado will pay \$264,112. Larimer County will pitch in \$42,138 from its open space tax revenue, and the rest of the value will be donated by the landowners.

Larimer County also will spend as much as \$47,000 total for transaction costs, including surveys and appraisals.

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County votes to spend \$354,112 on conservation easements

By PAMELA DICKMAN
 REPORTER-HERALD STAFF WRITER

FORT COLLINS — The Larimer County commissioners agreed to spend nearly \$90,000 of county money and \$264,112 of grant money to protect 471 acres from development. Tom Donnelly and Steve Johnson approved three new conservation easements north of Fort Collins during their Tuesday meeting.

The third commissioner, Kathay Rennels, was not at the meeting. The easements are on private property in an area of Larimer County that land preservationists are trying to protect from development.

County officials are working with land trust and nature nonprofits as well as other government agencies to save more than 55,400 acres known as the Laramie Foothills Mountains to Plains project. The new easements are in that target area.

"They fit nicely with the other properties," said Johnson. The diverse habitat, like its name, literally stretches from the plains just west of Interstate 25 to the foothills

and from north Larimer County to Wyoming. The three new conservation easements, like much of the protected area, are private property.

That means the owner agrees not to develop the land but retains ownership and use; the property is not open to the public. However, a large portion of the preservation project

is open to the public in the form of Larimer County's Red Mountain Open Space and Fort Collins' Soapstone Prairie Natural Area. Both opened this summer.

In that same area, the new easements protect 471 total acres with a collective value of \$350,000, according to Jerry White, senior land agent.

Of that, Great Outdoors

PRESERVED LAND

"So what if somebody wants to develop those hard to reach and even harder to develop areas that our commissioners just spent \$350,000 to preserve. It's hard to imagine there's too much rush by developers to do much to increase the tax base and create new jobs in that area. That's over \$350,000 to the owners of land very, very few would ever even remotely consider developing."

LAND PURCHASE

"This is in today's Reporter-Herald hot line and it's about land purchase. Let's drill for oil on some of that land and be oil independent, if we have so much."

"Spending taxpayer money for preservation of 471 acres was a reckless decision made by our commissioners. That area in Northern Colorado contains millions of square miles that also are as barren and wind driven as what Larimer County paid over \$350,000 for."

LAND PURCHASE

"To think that our commissioners have just paid over \$350,000 of taxpayer money to preserve land no one will ever see or use is way over the top. Our federal government already has billions of square acres just like it that are preserved for us. The last thing Larimer County needs is to buy even more."

COUNTY COMMISSION PRIORITIES

"These current commissioners have gotten out of control with their spending on preservation plans. Wish we knew how many more billions of square miles just like this huge purchase are available at fair market value with no amenities. It's tough to imagine that amount of money could be a priority over needed budget items that were cut."

COMMISSIONERS WORK

"Here we go again with commissioners spending taxpayer money for the preservation of land in the middle of nowhere to be used for nothing. Who exactly are these people who receive money for the remote and inaccessible and undesirable acreage?"